



DESOTO COUNTY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

CASE#: COMP-0015-2025

REQUEST: County-Initiated Text Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Element

APPLICANT: DeSoto County Government

PROPERTY ID: NA

PROPERTY ADDRESS: NA

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW REPORT

The following are proposed amendments to the DeSoto County Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Element that are related to providing higher bonus densities for designated Workforce and Affordable Housing developments within the existing Neighborhood Mixed Use Future Land Use and Urban Center Mixed Use categories. The amendments are limited to areas of unincorporated county that are in proximity to infrastructure and services. These higher bonus densities criteria have been clarified but relocated to the LDRs and are part of that amendment. Other amendments provide additional policy clarification and general clean-up.

I. BACKGROUND

The following provides a background for the need for affordable and workforce housing in unincorporated DeSoto County. Most new single-family residential subdivisions in the county are developed with relatively low densities (dwelling units per acre). The most common are the minor subdivisions (6 lots or less) and larger scale PUD zoned developments by major developers. For minor subdivisions, the lots can be larger (e.g., 5, 10 acres or greater) and can be as small as ½ acre if they meet the zoning requirements and any utility requirements by the State for well and septic.

Most larger scale single-family residential tract home builders prefer major subdivisions of 200 + units with 1.5 to 2 dwelling units per gross acre in private, gated communities and have PUD zoning. This low density is typically due to the likely presence of wetlands, typical sizing of infrastructure (e.g., roadway widths, etc.), providing amenities, the requirements of open space, buffers, setbacks, and stormwater ponds.

While both subdivision types are common, both types of lower density development can be financially challenging for the local government to serve in terms of revenue earned versus the cost of providing services and infrastructure. As an example, this is especially true when it comes to transportation capacities and the amount of driving (commute times, lane miles utilized per capita, etc.) that future residents and service providers will use in daily life. More lane miles used per household means more road miles for a local government to maintain.

Location and density are critical components to the efficiency of services that are mentioned in the Bonus Density criteria (Policy 1.1.4). However, due to the amount of detail associated and the need for the exact language in the LDRs, the policy has been generalized and the more specific language moved to the LDRs.

In terms of providing incentives or criteria for affordable housing, the County does have existing requirements for at least 10% affordable or workforce housing within villages. These are new developments within designated “New Communities”, which are established by the New Community Area Map, FLUEMS-8 in the Future Land Use Element. There are two New Communities on the map with existing entitlements mentioned in the policies under Objective 4.1. However, neither New Community 1 or 2 has yet to achieve any significant development or affordable housing.

Like many rural communities in the region and throughout the State of Florida, housing is often developed in areas that are not near infrastructure and services, making housing less affordable, which is an issue for the County and its workforce. According to United Way of Florida’s 2024 ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) Report, which examined data in 2023, DeSoto households that met the ALICE criteria were 40% (state avg. 34%) of the 12,656 households. Meaning, these households are living “paycheck to paycheck” and any unexpected expenses can be traumatic.

The Household Survival Budget from the ALICE Report reflects the minimum cost to live and work in the current economy and includes housing, childcare, food, transportation, health care, technology, and taxes. It does not include savings for emergencies or future goals like college or retirement. In 2023, household costs in every county in Florida were well above the Federal Poverty Level of \$14,580 for a single adult and \$30,000 for a family of four. For DeSoto County in 2023, the survival budget for the various types of households is as follows:

Name	Single Adult	One Adult	One Adult	Two Adults	Two Adults	Two Adults	Single Senior	Two Seniors
		One Child	One		Two Children	Two	65+	65+
Housing	\$ 788	\$ 805	\$ 805	\$ 805	\$ 910	\$ 910	\$ 788	\$ 805
Child Care	\$ -	\$ 219	\$ 583	\$ -	\$ 438	\$ 1,459	\$ -	\$ -
Food	\$ 465	\$ 786	\$ 705	\$ 852	\$ 1,429	\$ 1,261	\$ 428	\$ 784
Transportation	\$ 469	\$ 604	\$ 604	\$ 709	\$ 996	\$ 996	\$ 399	\$ 568
Health Care	\$ 162	\$ 488	\$ 488	\$ 488	\$ 759	\$ 759	\$ 575	\$ 1,150
Technology	\$ 86	\$ 86	\$ 86	\$ 116	\$ 116	\$ 116	\$ 86	\$ 116
Miscellaneous	\$ 197	\$ 299	\$ 327	\$ 297	\$ 465	\$ 550	\$ 228	\$ 342
Taxes	\$ 269	\$ 201	\$ 256	\$ 346	\$ 270	\$ 443	\$ 335	\$ 583
Monthly Total	\$ 2,436	\$ 3,488	\$ 3,854	\$ 3,613	\$ 5,383	\$ 6,494	\$ 2,839	\$ 4,348
ANNUAL TOTAL	\$ 29,232	\$ 41,856	\$ 46,248	\$ 43,356	\$ 64,596	\$ 77,928	\$ 34,068	\$ 52,176
Hourly Wage	\$ 15	\$ 21	\$ 23	\$ 22	\$ 32	\$ 39	\$ 17	\$ 26

For calculating affordability, state agencies consider the Area Median Income (AMI). The AMI for DeSoto County, FL in 2025 is \$64,400 and the following illustrates what thresholds area households based upon their income, could qualify for housing programs. Developers that provide housing at these levels and higher levels (e.g., 80-120% AMI) may also be able to qualify for various incentives and financing with various state and federal programs for new housing. Most incentive programs are for rental housing though, instead of homeownership-based programs.

- Extremely Low-Income (30% AMI):
 - 1 Person: \$15,650
 - 4 Persons: \$32,150
- Very Low-Income (50% AMI):
 - 1 Person: \$24,950
 - 4 Persons: \$47,000
- Low-Income (80% AMI):
 - 1 Person: \$39,900
 - 4 Persons: \$56,950

Another major factor in household survival next to food is transportation. The average cost of insuring, fueling, maintaining, registration, and taxes associated with auto ownership in Florida is \$8,483 per vehicle (*which does not include the cost of the actual vehicle itself*) according to GoBankingRates.com, BankRate.com, and Insurance.com. Owning more than one automobile can be challenging for lower income households, which is why proximity to employment and services are critical. If a household can have one fewer car, better housing and other needs are more achievable.

Housing density is a critical component of providing affordable housing. Land values remain and continue to increase in cost. Recent trends show a slight decline in housing and land prices, but overall prices are still high versus wages and make home ownership and rent challenging for the community's workforce. The ability for a developer to provide more dwelling units per acre of property is critical to the ability to provide a greater quantity of housing to the area and potentially some affordable units.

Multi-family developments can provide a greater quantity of affordable housing more efficiently than single-family attached and detached housing due to the limited amount of infrastructure that must be constructed per household (e.g., water lines, sewer lines, new streets, stormwater infrastructure, etc.). Multi-family design concentrates the dwelling units with a minimal amount of infrastructure. Typically, multi-family buildings are constructed on existing public streets and connect/extend existing utilities to their site. Residents normally park their vehicles at on-site parking lots and utilize any on-site amenities for recreation. These savings are passed on in the business plan of development translating to the ability to charge reduced rents. Multi-family rental developments also have more programs available to them in terms of developing affordable housing versus single-family and ownership programs.

Greater density in these specific locations also provides incentives for developers of market-rate ownership-based (non-rental) housing to build in areas that are in closer proximity to services as the proposed definition of affordable housing includes proposed development with at least 25% of units designated as affordable. It also provides the ability for the developer to integrate some affordable units at the desired income levels into their market rate project. In many other jurisdictions, they provide other incentives for affordable housing to include waiver of certain development requirements, quicker / priority development and permit review, etc.

As mentioned in the Bonus Density Criteria in Policy 1.1.4, location is not only critical to achieve the bonus density, but it is also critical to the residents. For affordable housing developers, the lower costs to develop (locate on existing roads, utilizes, etc.) are extended to the price of the rent that can be charged to future residents. The location of affordable housing in proximity to services, employment, schools, etc., also adds to the affordability of maintaining a household budget, especially if one fewer automobile per household can be achieved.

The current maximum densities provided for in the DeSoto County Comprehensive Plan are relatively low and more rural or suburban oriented. When property is located near services and infrastructure, higher densities should be considered and may help to encourage housing that is more attainable for residents and the workforce. According to the National Association of Home Builders, [*How Zoning Regulations Affect Affordable Housing*](#), Nov. 11, 2024, "... *implementing zoning reforms that encourage higher-density developments and reduce bureaucratic barriers will create a more accessible housing landscape.*"

Methodology of Proposed Changes

DeSoto County's Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Element has a variety of Future Land Use Map designations, providing for residential and non-residential development. The designations also allow a variety of residential densities (dwelling units per acre) and non-residential intensities (floor-area-ratio of land area to building area).

The Future Land Use Element also allows for the approval of Bonus Density, as qualified by Policy 1.1.4. This policy states these higher density opportunities can be found to be appropriate when developing in proximity to public infrastructure, proposing designs that protect environmentally sensitive areas, providing increased open and public recreational spaces, and other exceptional design components, that help to balance the higher densities with designs that are determined to be more community oriented and efficient to serve (given level of detail and not general policy guidance, detail has been moved to LDRs and clarified).

The Urban Center Mixed Use and Neighborhood Mixed Use categories currently offer an existing bonus maximum density of 8 and 5 du/ac respectively. They appear to be the best areas to offer higher bonus densities (up to 12 du/ac) for Workforce and Affordable housing designated development, as development in these areas are primarily residential uses in progressive degrees of urban intensity with higher density in areas adjacent to or within the Urban Center and less density/intensity in areas adjacent to the Low and Medium Density Residential and Rural/Agricultural categories.

These areas generally have existing or planned service with central water and sewer systems, stormwater management facilities, and paved public roadways. They are also in proximity to services and major employers. The location of the Urban Center Mixed Use and Neighborhood Mixed Use areas are normally at major collector and arterial road intersections, where such crossroads act as village and hamlet town centers.

It is important to balance growth and development with the rural and agricultural history of the community. Finding areas for denser development that work from an infrastructure and compatibility perspective is critical. Locating this type of affordable housing near employers and schools is also important for working families.

III. PROPOSED CHANGES TO ELEMENT

The following updates are proposed and highlighted in yellow. Below is the Land Use Summary Table and related policies, which serves as a quick reference guide for staff and the public to understand the minimum and maximum densities (dwelling units per acre – abbreviated as du/acre) and intensities (Floor to Area Ratio – abbreviated as FAR) by land use category which has specific items reflected not reflected in the other polices and vice-versa.

Policy 1.1.2: Land Use Categories Summary. The County shall implement the following land use categories as shown on the Future Land Use Map:

Land Use	Base Density/Intensity	Bonus Density/Intensity² (Policy 1.1.3)
<i>Rural/Agriculture</i>	<i>Residential – Up to 1 du/10 acres Non-residential – Up to 0.4 FAR maximum</i>	No bonus
<i>Low-Density Residential</i>	<i>Residential – Up to 2 du/acre Non-residential – Up to 0.4 FAR</i>	<i>3.5 du/ac maximum* 1.0 FAR maximum</i>

Land Use	Base Density/Intensity	Bonus <u>Density/Intensity</u>[*] (Policy 1.1.3)
Medium-Density Residential	Residential – Up to 3.5 du/acre	5 du/ac maximum *
Neighborhood (Live/Work) Mixed Use	Residential – Up to 3.5 du/acre Non-residential – Up to 0.4 FAR	5 du/ac maximum* 8 du/ac maximum for workforce housing* 12 du/ac maximum for affordable housing* 0.6 FAR maximum*
Employment Center	Non-residential – Up to 0.5 FAR	Non-residential – Up to 0.7 FAR 0.7 FAR maximum*
Urban Central Mixed Use	Residential – Up to 5 du/acre Non-residential – Up to 0.6 FAR	8 du/acre maximum 10 du/acre maximum for workforce housing* 12 du/ac maximum for affordable housing* 2.0 FAR maximum
Commercial	Non-residential- Up to 0.25 FAR	Non-residential – Up to 0.35 FAR maximum*
Public Land and Institutions	<i>Publicly and semi-publicly owned lands that are effectively controlled from developing into a typical residential density or private non-residential land use not involved in service to the public. Examples include park, correctional facilities, sewer plants, etc.</i>	
Electrical Generating Facility	<i>This land use category is intended for electrical power generating facilities, which includes electric power plants and related facilities. This public service use includes directly related facilities for the production of electricity.</i>	
Preservation	<i>Dedicated by plat, site plan, easement or similar designation; permanently protected environmentally sensitive lands that may only be utilized for limited passive recreation.</i>	
Overlays	Conservation: <i>Limited development subject to environmental analysis and protection of natural resources. Reverts to underlying future land use category if not in conservation area.</i>	

Land Use	Base Density/Intensity	Bonus <u>Density/Intensity</u>[*] (Policy 1.1.3)
	Generalized Phosphate Mining: Areas identified as having the highest potential for phosphate mining based on soil types and recognized mineral deposits.	
	Existing Community Overlays (see Map FLUEMS-7): Areas identified as Fort Ogden, Nocatee, and the City of Arcadia Urban Expansion Area (Map FLUEMS-7).	
Master Planned Area	Identified and planned larger projects that must be developed as a whole. They are identified to ensure overall community/county integration and vision is achieved, versus isolated islands of development.	

Note: This is a summary table, please check associated policies for specific regulations as some land use categories have additional requirements or limitations.

***Subject to Policy 1.1.4.**

The following policies summarize the criteria for awarding density bonuses.

Policy 1.1.3 has been updated for consistency with the proposed changes to the specific land use policies and the title and policy has been amended clarifying that the policy covers the density *and* intensity.

Policy 1.1.3: Density Unit and Intensity Bonus Limits. *The Land Development Regulations shall require that Planned Developments developments seeking bonus density and/or intensity meet the and include performance criteria for density and intensity bonuses within the various future land use categories, up to the following levels:*

- (1) *Low-Density Residential Use - Up to 3.5 dwelling units per acre and up to a 1.0 FAR.*
- (2) *Medium-Density Residential Use - Up to 5 dwelling units per acre*
- (3) *Neighborhood Mixed Use – Up to 5 dwelling units per acre for market rate residential units and up to 8 du/ac for Workforce Housing and up to 12 du/ac for Affordable Housing (per Policy 1.1.4) and up to 0.6 FAR*
- (4) *Employment Center- up to 1.2 FAR*
- (5) *Urban Center Mixed Use – Up to 8 dwelling units per acre for market rate residential units and up to 10 du/ac for Workforce Housing and up to 12 du/ac for Affordable Housing (per Policy 1.1.4); up to 1.6 FAR*

Policy 1.1.4 contains language requiring the establishment of a bonus point schedule for the Land Development Regulations (LDR) but was never created. This policy has been amended to generally reflect the existence of criteria, but the specifics are in the LDRs.

Policy 1.1.4 : Density and Intensity Bonus Criteria. ~~A bonus point schedule shall be established within the Land Development Regulations. The Land Development Regulations shall provide criteria for the award of bonus density and intensity which schedule shall give consideration to the performance criteria listed below as a minimum:~~

~~(1) Provisions and overall design of the project, proximity to public infrastructure (water, sewer, urban roads), employment, affordable housing, and services.~~

~~(2) Proximity to public safety (Fire/EMS)~~

~~(3) Proximity to schools~~

~~(4) Use of clustering and protection of environmentally sensitive areas~~

~~(5) Increased urban design and landscaping~~

~~(6) Increased public recreation and open space~~

~~(7) Affordable Housing~~

~~(8) Mixed use developments and mixed use buildings~~

~~(9) Adjacent to lands developed with similar densities~~

~~(10) Connectivity between developments~~

~~(11) Donation of usable public land~~

~~(12) Use of multiple performance criteria to achieve higher densities~~

~~Transfer of Development Rights (TDR's)~~

Policy 1.6.9 has been amended to clarify the maximum base density and additional density if a proposal is consistent with the Bonus Density criteria. However, staff reports include an analysis for consistency with these standards but there is no points system in the Land Development Regulations but specific criteria are now proposed.

Policy 1.6.9: *Each village shall have a village center. The village center shall be designed as a shopping center to include uses such as grocery anchor, restaurants, office and general retail. Vertical mixed-use buildings are encouraged.* ~~Bonus points for intensity shall be determined within the Land Development Regulations.~~

The following new policy describes the maximum densities and intensities currently available in the Neighborhood Mixed Use land use category, which is not mentioned in this section as it is in the earlier summary policies. It also adds additional density for housing developments meeting the criteria of Policy 1.1.4.a and utilizes the proposed definitions of Workforce and Affordable housing and assigns them respective maximum densities.

Policy 1.6.13: ~~The maximum base density allowed for residential projects within the Neighborhood Mixed Use category is 3.5 dwelling units per acre. The maximum bonus density that may be allowed for residential projects is up to 5 dwelling units per acre if the bonus density criteria in the LDRs are met.~~

The following new policy describes where the 12 du/ac maximum density can occur consistent with the LDRs.

Policy 1.6.14: Workforce Housing developments may have a maximum bonus density of 8 du/ac and Affordable Housing developments may have a maximum bonus density of 12 du/ac if bonus density criteria are met in Policy 1.1.4 and consistent with the criteria in the LDRs.

The Urban Center Mixed Use land use designation is within the City of Arcadia Urban Expansion Area, which has public schools within it. As a comparison of the proposed increases in density and intensity, the City of Arcadia has the following land use categories and maximum densities/intensities that are adjacent to this area:

- Low Density Residential – 6 du/ac max
- Medium Density Residential – 14 du/ac max
- High Density Residential – 30 du/ac max
- Mixed Use Business – 14 du/ac max
- Business – 3.0 FAR max
- Public Building and Grounds – 3.0 FAR Max

According to Map FLUEMS-7 (see Exhibit C), the areas (north and east) adjacent to the City are designated Urban Center Mixed Use which has a base maximum density of 5 du/ac and a bonus density maximum of 8 (12 du/ac proposed for affordable housing). West of US 17 is designated Rural / Agricultural on County’s land use.

The area along the south side of the City’s golf course to NE Roan Street is designated by the City as Rec and Open Space (golf course), Industrial, Business, and Medium Density Residential, with appropriate buffering by new development in the county, and could be generally compatible with adjacent development (subject to County staff review of specific development applications).

Policy 1.9.3: A mixture of uses shall be provided within the Urban Center Mixed Use category. The mix shall be regulated by each Special Community as depicted in Maps FLUEMS-7 and FLUEMS-8 that include the Urban Center Mixed Use future land use designation as follows:

Arcadia Urban Expansion Area:

<i>General Use</i>	<i>Density/ Intensity</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
<i>Non-Residential Uses</i>	<i>0.6 FAR</i>	<i>30%</i>	<i>50%</i>

General Use	Density/ Intensity	Minimum	Maximum
<i>Residential Uses</i>	8 du/ac <u>Per Future Land Use Map Category</u>	20%	50%
<i>Light Industrial</i>	0.6 FAR	0%	20%

The following new policy describes the maximum densities available in the Urban Center Mixed Use land use category but are not mentioned in this section as it is in the earlier summary policies. It adds additional density for housing developments meeting the criteria of Policy 1.1.4.a and utilizes the proposed definitions of Workforce or Affordable housing and assigns them respective maximum densities.

Policy 1.9.9: The maximum base density allowed for residential projects within the Urban Center Mixed Use category is 5 dwelling units per acre. The maximum bonus density that may be allowed for residential projects is up to 8 dwelling units per acre if bonus density criteria in the LDRs are met.

The following new policy describes the bonus density maximums for designated affordable and workforce housing developments if consistent with the criteria in the LDRs.

Policy 1.9.10: Workforce Housing developments may have a maximum bonus density of 8 du/ac and Affordable Housing developments may have a maximum bonus density of 12 du/ac if bonus density criteria are met in Policy 1.1.4 and consistent with the criteria in the LDRs.

The following new policy clarifies the maximum FAR and makes it consistent with the existing numbers in the summary table in Policy 1.1.2. No changes to the maximum are proposed, just adds language in the related policies for clarification.

Policy 1.9.11: Non-residential projects within the Urban Center Mixed Use land use shall be limited to a maximum floor area ratio not to exceed 0.6 but may apply for bonus intensity of up to 2.0 FAR if the development meets the criteria in Policy 1.1.4 and the LDRs.

The County does not have any policies or restricts (outside of FAA requirements surrounding airports) for building heights. The accompanying amendment to the Land Development Regulations provides a maximum height for residential uses.

New definitions are proposed to clarify references to “affordable housing” and “workforce housing” in these amendments.

DEFINITIONS

Affordable Housing means housing which is available at a price or rent not exceeding 30 percent of a household's gross income. Owner-occupied housing costs include principal, interest, insurance, and property taxes. Rental housing costs include the contract rent. Low-income households are defined as a household with gross income which are at or below 80 percent of median income adjusted for family size, consistent with annually adjusted Department of Housing and Urban Development income guidelines.

Workforce Housing means housing affordable to natural persons or families whose total annual household income falls between 80% and 120% of the Area Median Income (AMI). Income limits, adjusted for household size.

IV. DATA & ANALYSIS

Section 163.3177(1)(f), Florida Statutes, provides that all mandatory and optional elements of the comprehensive plan and plan amendments shall be based upon relevant and appropriate data and an analysis by the local government that may include, but not be limited to, surveys, studies, community goals and vision, and other data available at the time of adoption of the comprehensive plan or plan amendment. To be based on data means to react to it in an appropriate way and to the extent necessary indicated by the data available on that particular subject at the time of adoption of the plan or plan amendment at issue.

The following is a review for consistency with the DeSoto County Comprehensive Plan. Staff has also provided a more detailed *Supportive Data and Analysis Report for County-Initiated Comprehensive Plan Text Amendment COMP-0015-2025*, see Exhibit D, referenced in this report.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan

The proposed amendment application has been reviewed for consistency with the following Comprehensive Plan provisions.

Future Land Use Element (FLUE) Provisions

GOAL 1: FUTURE GROWTH. Through 2040, future growth in DeSoto County will be managed using sustainability and smart growth principles to accommodate new growth without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The Future Land Use Element shall be used as a tool to direct the most intensive

growth into the urban center and surrounding areas, optimizing services and infrastructure, protecting the rural character of the County, and protecting the environment.

*Consistency analysis: The proposed amendment increasing the allowable density of the Urban Center Mixed Use and the Neighborhood Mixed-Use categories is for designated Workforce and Affordable housing developments. The policy has been amended for future projects to consider overall project design, proximity to public infrastructure (water, sewer, urban roads), employment, and services. The details implementing this policy have been moved to the LDRs. Increasing density and concentrating development in these areas is consistent with this goal. Based on the above, it is concluded the amendment can be found **consistent** with this goal.*

Policy 1.1.13: BEBR. The County will ensure that the Future Land Use Map includes adequate amounts of lands to accommodate the medium projected housing growth by the University of Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research for a 10-year and 15-year planning period.

*Consistency analysis: According to UF BEBR, using a Medium population growth, the county's population is expected to grow by approximately 1,000 persons in 25 years (40 persons or 7 dwelling units per year). Using UF BEBR's High projections, the county's population is expected to grow by approximately 6,500 persons in 25 years (260 persons or 102 dwelling units per year). Given the amount of growth and development in the county, the High projection at this point in 2025, is a more reasonable projection. This slower rate of growth provides the County with decades to meet adopted level of service standards. It is also important to acknowledge that Future Land Use designations and their maximum density have little to no impact on the rate or amount of population growth in this case. Most developments do not utilize the maximum development density or intensity available. Based on the above, it is concluded the amendment can be found **consistent** with this policy.*

Objective 1.16: Sprawl and Redevelopment. The County shall maintain regulations and procedures to limit the proliferation of urban sprawl and encourage redevelopment and revitalization of blighted areas.

Policy 1.16.1: The County shall encourage infill development within the Urban Center Mixed Use, Employment Center and Neighborhood Mixed Use Areas of the County by:

- (1) Increases in densities or intensities of use for infill parcels served by adequate public facilities and services.
- (2) Expedition of the permitting process for infill development proposals.
- (3) Consideration of exceptions to requirements such as minimum lot sizes, minimum setbacks, or minimum parking requirements to provide for residential, affordable residential and economically viable commercial opportunities that are compatible with the adjacent uses.

- (4) Prioritize public expenditures to areas of higher intensities and densities of use to encourage development to locate where public facilities are more readily and more economically available.
- (5) Coordination with municipal, county and state transportation facilities to provide adequate levels of service that support higher densities and intensities of development within or adjacent to currently developed areas.

*Consistency analysis: The Urban Center Mixed Use and Neighborhood Mixed Use Areas and the specific areas identified are recognized as being in developing and redevelopment areas of the county in proximity to infrastructure and services. Concentrating Workforce and Affordable residential development within these areas potentially increases the efficiency of County services and infrastructure. Proximity to employment also increased affordability and overall cost of living for residents. Based on the above, it is concluded that the amendment can be found **consistent** with this policy and the Supportive Data and Analysis Report.*

FLUE Policy 1.16.2: The County shall direct development to areas where services and facilities are available to accommodate additional growth.

Consistency analysis: The Urban Center Mixed Use and Neighborhood Mixed Use Areas and the specific areas identified are recognized as being in developing and redevelopment areas of the county in proximity to infrastructure and services. Concentrating Workforce and Affordable residential development within these areas potentially increases the efficiency of County services and infrastructure. Proximity to employment also increased affordability and overall cost of living for residents.

The proposed amendments to increase the bonus density of affordable housing only in these specific areas is consistent with this policy and the Supportive Data and Analysis Report.

*Based on the higher BEBR population projections, it is concluded that DeSoto County will have decades to accommodate any impacts generated from the proposed amendment. Based on the above, it is concluded the amendment can be found **consistent** with this policy and the Supportive Data and Analysis Report.*

Objective 1.22: Concurrency Management. DeSoto County shall implement a development review process to ensure that development occurs where public facilities have sufficient capacity to serve the existing population, reservations of approved development orders, and for the needs of the development proposed, based on level-of-service standards as established by the Comprehensive Plan, adopted in accordance with Section 163.3202(1), FS. and implemented through the procedures within the Land Development Regulations.

Consistency analysis: DeSoto County's Comprehensive Plan enforces concurrency management consistent with State requirements (Chapter 163.3180)

and those outlined in the LDRs and Comprehensive Plan. All new development will be required to meet these requirements.

*According to UF BEBR, using a medium population growth, the county's population is expected to grow by approximately 1,000 persons in 25 years (40 persons or 7 dwelling units per year). Using UF BEBR's High projections, the county's population is expected to grow by approximately 6,500 persons in 25 years (260 persons or 102 dwelling units per year). Given the amount of growth and development in the county, the High projection at this point in 2025, is a more reasonable projection. This slower rate of growth provides the County with decades to meet adopted level of service standards. Based on the above, it is concluded the amendment can be found **consistent** with this objective, supporting policies, and the Supportive Data and Analysis Report.*

Objective 3.1: Fort Ogden Community: Vision Statement. The County recognizes the Fort Ogden Community (as designated in the Interim 2040 Existing Community Overlay Map FLUEMS-7 and shall preserve the character of this community as a Rural Settlement.

*Consistency analysis: The proposed text amendment does not impact Fort Ogden. Based on the above, it is concluded that the amendment can be found **consistent** with this objective.*

Objective 3.2: Nocatee Community: Vision Statement. The County recognizes the Nocatee Community (as designated in the Interim 2040 Existing Community Overlay Map FLUEMS-7 and shall preserve the character of this community as a contemporary, mixed use community.

Consistency analysis: The proposed text amendment increases the maximum bonus density for designated Workforce and Affordable housing developments within the Neighborhood Mixed Use Future Land Use Category, which includes the Nocatee community. Nocatee Elementary School is located within the Nocatee Community.

Like all development, any application, whether low density or higher density, is analyzed by staff to determine if the project meets the standards of the Comprehensive Plan and LDRs. All projects are brought before the Board of County Commissioners in a public hearing to determine if the project is also compatible with the area.

Any proposed development within the Nocatee community will be required to be consistent with the Neighborhood Mixed Use designation, this objective and its supporting policies addressing planning principles, design standards, and protection of adjacent rural areas. Any development proposed will be required to

*be consistent with the character of the area. Based on the above, it is concluded that the amendment can be found **consistent** with this objective.*

Objective 3.3: Arcadia Urban Expansion Area: Vision Statement. The County recognizes the Arcadia Urban Expansion Area (as designated in the Interim 2040 Existing Community Areas Overlay Map FLUEMS-7) and shall guide the development of these lands into compact, mixed-use, pedestrian friendly neighborhoods connected by areas of permanent open space. The form of new development within the expansion area is intended to extend the historic development patterns of the existing “central city” and to reinforce the vision of Arcadia as a City and not as a central city surrounded by suburban sprawl development.

Consistency analysis: The proposed text amendment increases the maximum bonus density for Workforce and Affordable Housing developments within the Urban Center Mixed Use and Neighborhood Mixed Use Future Land Use Categories, which includes the Arcadia Urban Expansion Area. As a comparison of the existing maximum base, bonus, and proposed increase in density for affordable projects, the City of Arcadia has the following land use categories and maximum densities/intensities that are adjacent to this area which in some cases are higher:

- *Low Density Residential – 6 du/ac max*
- *Medium Density Residential – 14 du/ac max*
- *High Density Residential – 30 du/ac max*
- *Mixed Use Business – 14 du/ac max*
- *Business – 3.0 FAR max*
- *Public Building and Grounds – 3.0 FAR Max*

According to Map FLUEMS-7 (see Exhibit C), the areas (north and east) adjacent to the City are designated Urban Center Mixed Use which has a base maximum density of 5 du/ac and a bonus density maximum of 8 (12 du/ac proposed for affordable housing).

The area along the south side of the City’s golf course to NE Roan Street is designated by the City as Rec and Open Space (golf course), Industrial, Business, and Medium Density Residential, with appropriate buffering by new development in the county, and could be generally compatible with adjacent development (subject to County staff review of specific development applications).

Like all development, any application, whether low density or higher density, is analyzed by staff to determine if the project meets the standards of the Comprehensive Plan and LDRs. All projects are brought before the Board of County Commissioners in a public hearing to determine if the project is also compatible with the area.

*Any proposed development within the Arcadia Urban Expansion Area will be required to be consistent with the designations, objectives and supporting policies addressing the area's philosophy, guiding principles, standards for review, design, TND principles, and street network. Based on the above, it is concluded that the amendment can be found **consistent** with this objective.*

Supportive Data and Analysis Report

Exhibit D is the Supportive Data and Analysis Report, which analyzes the impact of the proposed amendment on the County's infrastructure and services. The report analyzes the proposed increase in density for this existing land use category versus growth projections, infrastructure, and services provided by the County.

This report analyzes the existing base, bonus, and proposed maximum densities allowed by the amendments. However, it's important to also consider that the build-out of an area is usually substantially lower than the maximum density allowed in the future land use category. The existing FLUM has few locations that achieve maximum buildout / density (maximum dwelling units per acre).

The areas that are close to the maximum are usually those on existing smaller lots or with low density residential type subdivisions (tract home builders) where 2 or 3 du/ac is the typical maximum. When a development would utilize the denser 9-12 du/ac max for affordable housing, it typically occurs as one development of approximately 200 – 250 multi-family dwelling units with designated affordable units, associated parking, open space, and an amenity center near employment or service opportunities. The amendment caters to a limited number of builders and developers as well that would utilize it.

The report analyzed the eligible areas and created a more realistic build-out and growth projections for the subject areas and analyzed those impacts. It needs to be recognized that DeSoto County (or likely any country) does not have the current capacity in their infrastructure and services for their *existing and adopted* Future Land Use Map at buildout with maximum density. That was not the intent of the FLUM when established by the 1985 Growth Management Act to have all infrastructure and services existing for the current FLUM but was put in place as a 20-year plan along with the concurrency requirements to ensure development grew consistent with the County's adopted level-of-services standards for its infrastructure and services. The concurrency management policies of the Comprehensive Plan and LDRs ensure that all proposed development addresses these issues and requirements with each land development application. The County also makes capacity-adding improvements as required with its annually updated Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Given all these factors, the supportive report concludes that that there are no issues from a future capacity perspective not to support the amendment.

IV. PUBLIC NOTICE

Section 163.3184(11)(b), Florida Statutes, establishes the public hearing requirements for local Comprehensive Plan amendments. It provides the local governing body shall hold at least two advertised public hearings on the proposed amendment. The first public hearing is held at the transmittal stage. The public hearing must be held on a weekday at least 7 days after the day that the first advertisement is published pursuant to the requirements of chapter 125 or chapter 166. The second public hearing must be held at the adoption stage. That hearing must be held on a weekday at least 5 days after the day that the second advertisement is published pursuant to the requirements of chapter 125 or chapter 166.

Public notice includes advertising the amendment in a newspaper of general circulation in DeSoto County at least 10 days prior to each public hearing for the text amendment. The County has provided evidence that the amendment was noticed at least 10 days before the Planning Commission public hearing. Such notice is filed with the Division and incorporated herein by reference.

Florida Statutes Chapter 163.3184(3) Expedited State Review Process, which outlines the specific process for text amendments to Comprehensive Plans. These proposed amendments will have the following schedule:

- October 07, 2025 and March 3, 2026 – Legislative public hearing by the Planning Commission sitting as the Local Planning Agency
- March 10, 2026– Legislative public hearing with the Board of County Commissioners to consider transmittal of amendment to State.
- To Be Determined - Legislative public hearing with the Board of County Commissioners to consider adoption of the amendment.

Required Notifications

The public hearing on this item was advertised in the newspaper indicating the time, date, and location of the hearing as required by the State Statute and the DeSoto County Land Development Regulations.

V. ATTACHMENTS

- Exhibit A: Expedited State Review Flow Chart
- Exhibit B: Map FLUEMS-7, Existing Community Overlay Map
- Exhibit C: Proposed Resolution
- Exhibit D: Supportive Data and Analysis Report

VI. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Based upon the information contained in this Development Review Report, the following findings of fact and conclusions of law are offered:

1. An application to amend the Comprehensive Plan's Interim 2040 Future Land Use Element by changing the base and bonus residential density maximums in the Neighborhood Mixed Use and Urban Center Mixed Use designation was filed with the Development Department. The Development Department has reviewed the application and determined the application is complete.
2. The Planning Director has reviewed the text amendment application for consistency with Section 163.3184(3), Florida Statutes, and concludes the application can be found to be **consistent** with those requirements.
3. The Planning Director has reviewed the proposed amendment against the Comprehensive Plan's goals, objectives and policies and concludes it can be found to be **consistent**.
4. The due public notice requirements have been satisfied.

VII. ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS

The Planning Commission / LPA has one of the following alternative actions at its disposal:

- A. Enter into the record the Development Review Report and all other record evidence presented at the hearing and forward the record to the Board of County Commissioners with a recommendation of approval and that the proposed Resolution be transmitted to the State Department of Commerce.
- B. Enter into the record the Development Review Report and all record evidence presented at the hearing, amend the findings and conclusions contained herein to support the Planning Commission's recommendation, and forward the record to the Board of County Commissioners with the recommendation of denial and that the proposed Resolution is not transmitted to the State Department of Commerce.

VIII. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- A. Planning Commission recommendation. Heard at the October 7, 2025 and March 3, 2026. Planning Commission had many comments and suggestions at the October 7, 2025 meeting, therefore staff revised proposal. Planning Commission recommended approval at the March 3, 2026, 5-0

- B. Board of County Commission action. The first reading is scheduled for March 10, 2026 meeting for transmittal.

Exhibit A – Expedited State Review Flow Chart

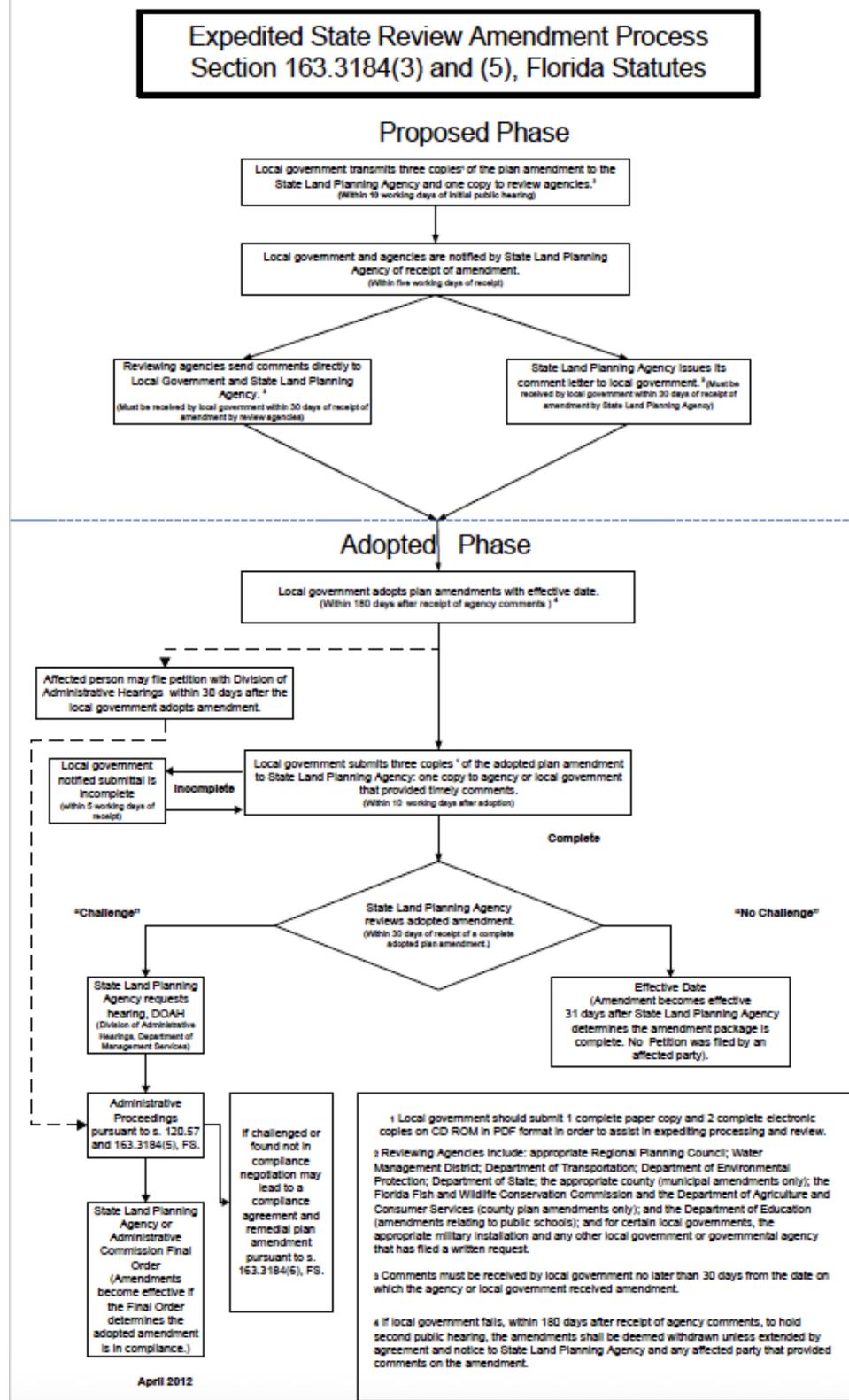


Exhibit B: Proposed Resolution

Exhibit C: Map FLUEMS-7

**MAP FLUEMS-7
DESOTO COUNTY
INTERIM 2040
EXISTING
COMMUNITY
OVERLAY MAP**



- Legend**
- Roads
 - Urban Center Mixed Use
 - Neighborhood Mixed Use



DeSoto County Florida
Board of County Commissioners
201 E. Oak Street
Arcadia, FL 32006
(904) 894-4424

Disclaimer:
This map is a representation of described public
information for the stated purpose. DeSoto County
assumes no liability for the use of this map. An error may occur in
the use of this map.

Revised: 05/2023
DeSoto County, FL

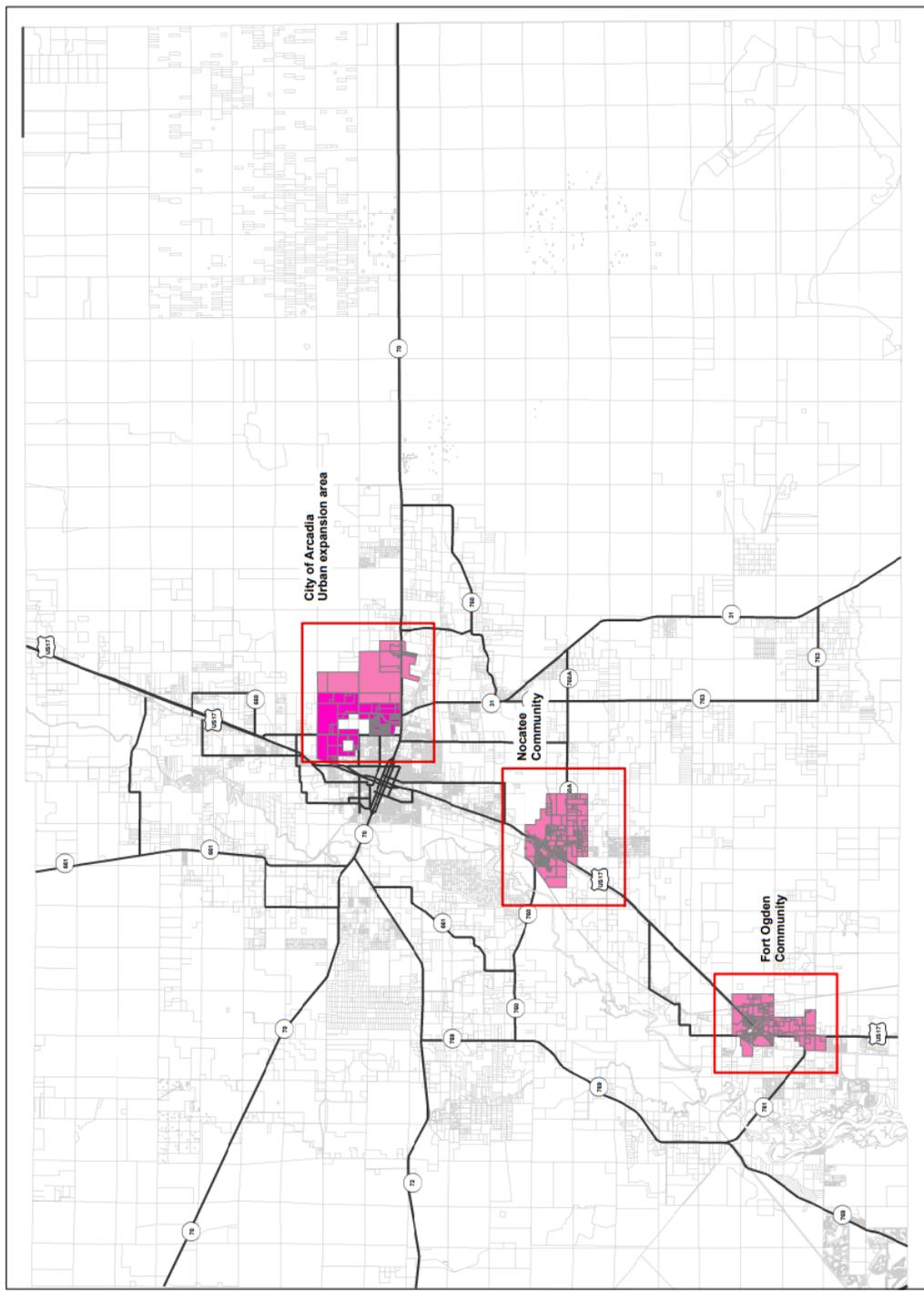


Exhibit D: Supportive Data and Analysis Report